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SAUDI ARABIA AND THE SOVIET THREAT

-- Russian ambitions in the Persian Gulf predate the Bolshevik Revolution and as a world power the Soviet Union has long had an interest in political influence in this strategic part of the world.

-- The discovery of vast oil wealth, one-half of the world's reserves, has made the Persian Gulf area critical to world peace and prosperity. Over half of this oil is in Saudi Arabia. There are indications that the Soviet Union may in coming years become dependent itself on foreign oil: if so, its interest in influencing the Persian Gulf region will intensify.

-- Through many difficult years Saudi Arabia has been the bulwark of resistance to the spread of communist influence in the area. The Saudis fear keenly the Soviet threat, and have good reason.

-- To the north, the current Iran-Iraq conflict points out the volatility of the region and the current political weakness of the Iranian Government offers the Soviets the opportunity to expand their influence.

-- In the south of Arabia, the Soviet Union, over a decade ago, established a foothold in South Yemen in the former British colony of Aden. South Yemen appears increasingly to be a Soviet base of influence. Its well trained military is Soviet supplied. The Soviets enjoy naval facilities in Aden. The Soviets used South Yemen as a staging point to supply Ethiopia during the 1979 Horn of Africa hostilities. Soviet and Cuban advisers are in South Yemen and South Yemeni military forces fought along side

Russian and Cubans in the Horn of Africa.

-- South Yemen has long played a destabilizing role in the region. There have been three military engagements between South Yemeni and Saudi forces in border areas since 1969. Soviet-supported South Yemen supported a long rebellion in Oman and continues to support Omani opposition groups.

-- The Saudis see a Soviet threat in the Horn of Africa. The Saudis have supported Somalia in breaking its ties with the Soviet Union but the Soviets today are in a strong position in Ethiopia.

-- Thus, the Saudis feel pressured by the Soviet Union on virtually all sides.

-- Saudi Arabia has been resolute in its resistance to Soviet designs.

-- It is in our own interest that it remain so.

-- Saudi Arabia looks to U.S. support in developing its defense capability so that it can improve the security of its strategic energy resources.

-- U.S. national security requires a militarily strong Saudi Arabia.